



Democracy, Donald Trump, and the Future of the Canada-U.S. Security Community

Wilfrid Greaves, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Victoria

Network Coordinator
North American and Arctic Defence and
Security Network (NAADSN)

wgreaves@uvic.ca

@WillWJGreaves



Thesis: The Trump presidency has harmed the Canada-U.S. security community (PSC) by:

- 1) weakening shared identity and mutual trust between Canadians and Americans
- 2) undermining democratic norms and institutions that uphold U.S. domestic stability

Assessing the decline in shared identity, mutual trust, and democracy, **I argue the Canada-U.S. PSC won't endure if the United States does not also consider Canada's national and security interests, or if the United States threatens those interests.** Without a PSC, the absence of war in North America would reflect American domination over a weaker and dependent Canada.

Outline:

- What are Security Communities?
- Donald Trumps Canada
- The Present and Future of the PSC

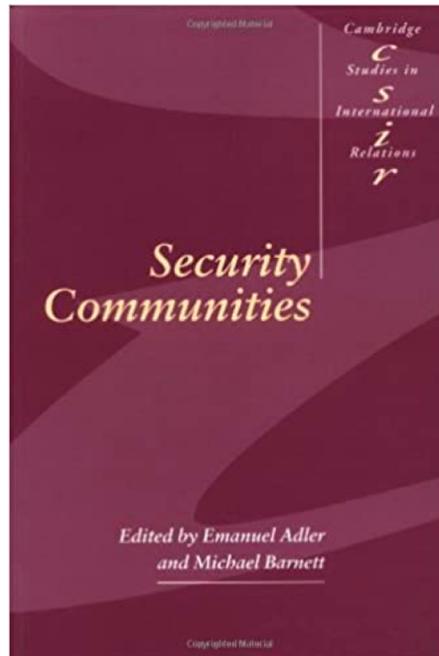


What are Security Communities?

1. 'Zones of peace': regions where war has become unthinkable
2. Spaces in which sovereign units overcome mutual suspicion and renounce violence on the basis of amity or common interest
 - Characterized by: "Mutual sympathy and loyalties; of 'we feeling', trust, and mutual consideration; of partial identification in terms of self-images and interests; of mutually successful predictions of behavior" (Deutsch et al., 1957: 36)
 - 'Amalgamated' security communities occur when units integrate, as in federal states; when units retain their sovereignty, they are 'pluralistic' security communities (PSCs)



- The exemplar of security communities are the “**dependable expectations of peaceful change**” that produced a “non-war” region around the North Atlantic after WWII (Deutsch et al., 1957: 5)



- Adler and Barnett (1998) identify **shared identity** and **mutual trust** as “the proximate necessary conditions for the development of dependable expectations of peaceful change [...] The development of trust can strengthen mutual identification, and there is a general tendency to trust on the basis of mutual identification” (Adler and Barnett, 1998: 45)



- PSCs share three characteristics: “First, members of a community have **shared identities, values, and meanings** [...] Secondly, those in a community have **many-sided and direct relations** [...] Thirdly, communities exhibit a reciprocity that expresses some degree of **long-term interest** and perhaps even **altruism**” (Adler and Barnett, 1998: 31).
- Final criterion: for ‘comprehensive’ security communities, expectations of peaceful change apply to inter-state *and* domestic relations
 - “Domestic stability, defined as the absence of large-scale violence in a country, is a necessary condition of a security community” (Nathan, 2006: 277-278)
 - “Peace and security have both an extra- and intra-state dimension that are conceptually distinct, but must empirically co-exist if a region is to be regarded as a security community” (Väyrynen, 2000: 172)



Typology of Security Communities

	Amalgamated	Pluralistic
Inter-state	-	ASEAN; Gulf Cooperation Council; European Union
Comprehensive	Canada, Australia, the U.S.	North Atlantic PSC

Criteria for Comprehensive SCs:

1. Shared identity
2. Mutual trust
3. Domestic stability



- Canada-U.S. PSC is usually overlooked, despite having institutionalized peaceful relations in the 19th and early 20th centuries, making it “the oldest and most stable bilateral security community in the world” (Hataley and Leuprecht, 2019: 101)
- PSCs can regress from amity to conflict
- Haglund (2010: 193): “We might want to ask, bluntly, whether the North American zone of peace really is ‘idiot proof’, in the sense that nothing can be imagined that would return [...] North America to their prior condition of having been bad instead of good neighbours.”



The Canada-U.S. PSC

- **Reference:** Sean M. Shore. 1998. “No Fences Make Good Neighbours: The Development of the Canadian-US Security Community, 1871-1940.” In *Security Communities*, eds. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Canada-U.S. PSC was formed through two processes: **demilitarizing the border** and **elite imagining** of a shared North American identity (335)
- This produced a North American identity based on “cultural similarity, democracy, openness, the undefended border, and the enlightened use of arbitration and other depoliticized methods of conflict resolution”, facilitating amity and ‘we feeling’, making “trust part of Canadian and American self-identification” (348)
- From mid-20th century, the PSC was institutionalized through deep security, intelligence, and military cooperation and continental defence: e.g .the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, NATO, NORAD, Five Eyes



Donald Trumps Canada

- It's not all about Trump
 - Diplomatic and personality disputes have been common between Canada-U.S., and shared identity has been fraying for decades (Adams 2003, 2017)
 - Concerns over North Atlantic PSC have been common since 2003, and U.S. unilateralism has damaged allied relations
- But I agree with Drezner (2019): “This time is different [...] U.S. foreign policy will never recover”
 - His detailed critique of Trump's foreign policy omits Canada, but the warning also applies to the Canada-U.S. PSC



- The Trump Administration has damaged Canada-U.S. relations through actions that harm or threaten Canada's national interests, including:
 1. Undermining NATO and weakening U.S. commitment to Article 5
 2. Threatened cancellation of NAFTA
 3. Involving Canada in the geopolitical rivalry between the U.S. and China
 4. Weakening the nuclear arms limitation regime
 5. Undermining global climate change governance
 6. Characterizing Canada's legal claims to the Northwest Passage as "illegitimate"
 7. Import tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum exports to the U.S.
 8. Soleimani assassination and Ukrainian Airlines Flight 752
 9. U.S. response to COVID-19
- See Hilmer and Lagassé, 2018; Carment and Sands, 2019; Lajeunesse and Huebert, 2019



Steel and Aluminum Tariffs

- Imposed on the unprecedented basis that Canadian (and other) imports “threaten or impair the [U.S.] national security”
- Denounced by PM Trudeau as “absurd [...] inconceivable [...] unacceptable [...] and] an affront to the long-standing security partnership between Canada and the United States”
- Provoked reciprocal tariffs from Canada and other affected countries that lasted over a year and caused the most serious transatlantic diplomatic dispute since the Iraq War
- Trump’s approach to trade “threatens the very essence of the post-1980s nature of the Canadian political economy” (Nimijean, 2018: 44)

COVID-19 Pandemic

- Ordered 3M not to export masks and respirators to Canada, causing what 3M called “serious humanitarian consequences.”
- In March, the border closure agreement was overshadowed by a proposal to deploy 1,000 U.S. soldiers to secure and surveil the Canada-U.S. border
- Trump supports the idea, suggesting U.S. troops are already there, calling it “equal justice” because of the militarized U.S.-Mexico border, and linking it to the recent tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum
- The proposal was abandoned after protests from Canada, such as D-PM Freeland’s statement that it would be “damaging to our relationship [...] We just don’t think this is the right way to treat a trusted friend and ally”



Weakened Shared Identity

- Canadian and American attitudes have diverged since the 1960s: “At the most basic level – the level of our values, the feelings and beliefs that inform our understanding of and interaction with the world around us – Canadians and Americans are markedly different, and becoming more so” (Adams, 2003: 4)
- Trump has alienated Canadians from the United States
 - Nearly 65% who felt Canada was becoming more like the U.S. declined to 25% in 2017; 52% indicated Canada should become less like the U.S., only 8% more like it (Ekos, 2017: 7)
 - 56% of Canadians had an unfavourable impression of the U.S. in 2018, 39% favourable (Wike et al., 2018)
 - In 2018, 66% of Canadians felt relations with the United States had worsened since 2017, and 82% felt the U.S. took Canada’s interests into account “not too much or not at all” (Wike et al., 2018)



Shaken Mutual Trust

- The second pillar of ‘we feeling’ is mutual trust: “**Believing despite uncertainty** [...] Trust is a social phenomenon and dependent on the assessment that another actor will behave in ways that are consistent with normative expectations” (Adler and Barnett, 1998: 46)
- The Trump presidency has damaged mutual trust in the Canada-U.S. PSC in at least two ways:
 1. Rejecting America’s international commitments, including: the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Iran nuclear agreement, Paris climate change agreement, and Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and threatening withdrawal from NATO, NAFTA, the WTO, and the WHO



2. Donald Trump is untrustworthy

- He lies more often and about more things than any previous president, with the total number of documented lies exceeding 10,000 in the first 30 months
- Trump's personal and business history have been exposed as fraudulent and criminal
- His Administration is the least transparent and most corrupt of modern times
- He made at least 43 separate lies about Canada, some dozens of times, between April 2017-April 2019
- Other statements personally insult and directly reference private discussions with PM Trudeau

- Canadians distrust Trump and worry over his policies
- After the 2016 election Canadians were “shocked”, surprised”, “disappointed”, and “disgusted” at the result; 8% were “somewhat pleased” and 6% “really happy” (Anderson and Coletto, 2016)
- After Trump’s first 100 days in office, more than two thirds identified him as the worst or one of the worst U.S. presidents in history; 64-85% expected Trump’s policies to make things worse across all issues, including 79% who expected Canada’s economy to be harmed (Anderson and Coletto, 2017)
- When asked whether Canada should pursue a ‘Canada First’ policy similar to Trump’s ‘America First’ foreign policy, 60% of Canadians said no and 36% said yes (Ekos, 2017: 7-8)
- Overall, “more than 80% of Canadians see the US President as **arrogant, mean, unethical, thoughtless, undisciplined, and someone with bad values**. Large majorities see him as **dumb, unprincipled, ignorant and dishonest**” (Anderson and Coletto, 2017)
- “There is no regional or demographic group anywhere in Canada that gives President Trump a net positive approval rating” (Ekos, 2017: 6)



Declining U.S. Democracy

- Democratic norms and institutions are universally recognized as important for PSCs, generally, and fundamental to the Canada-U.S. PSC, specifically
- Democratic decline in the U.S. under Trump presidency is thus of considerable concern
- The details are numerous, but can be summarized in four categories
 1. Offensive personal conduct by President Trump
 2. Trump's efforts to obstruct justice
 3. Trump's unconstitutional conduct
 4. Undemocratic conduct by the Republican Party



4. Undemocratic conduct by the Republican Party:

- Impeding Congressional oversight or sanction of unconstitutional activities
- Utilizing state and federal legislative majorities to, inter alia: restrict voting rights among Democratic-leaning groups; foster populist anger and mistrust of media and other political institutions; entrench gerrymandered congressional districts; and strip executive powers from Democratic governors
- Republican voters increasingly support anti-democratic processes and institutions
- Reflects the entrenchment of anti-democratic, authoritarian politics across much of the United States, and within the ideology of its most electorally effective political party



MAGA Forever

- Trump has repeatedly, and more frequently, cast doubt on the integrity of U.S. elections, speculated about staying in office longer than two terms, and raised fears he will refuse to concede if defeated in November
- This conduct has damaged the quality of American democracy: The U.S.'s freedom index score dropping by 8/100 points from 2010-2017, three points when Trump took office
- The U.S. now ranks 53rd in the world, far behind all others in the North Atlantic region, including Canada (4th globally)
- This evidence supports for democratic “deconsolidation” within the United States, reflecting an alarming trend across many democratic societies (Foa and Mounk, 2017; Howe, 2017)



- The damage caused by the Trump presidency to Canada-U.S. relations is unlikely to be repaired quickly:
 1. Trump reflects a movement that will continue to exert influence on U.S. policy
 2. The organizational culture and leadership of the U.S. government agencies responsible for important aspects of the Canada-U.S. relationship have been affected
 3. PSCs are inherently reciprocal, and Canadians will remember that Americans have the capacity to elect – and maintain relatively strong support for – a president who deliberately, repeatedly, and casually harms America’s closest friends and allies
- The Trump presidency will end sooner or later, but its legacy will endure: “The Trump challenge to the norms and conventions of the Canada–US relationship, and to some of the shared institutions that mark this bilateral relationship as a ‘special relationship’ [...] will continue even after Trump leaves office” (Sands and Carment, 2019: 293).



The Present and Future of the PSC

- The combination of a weakened shared identity, shaken mutual trust, and democratic decline in the United States risk serious damage to the Canada-U.S. PSC
- The policies and consequences of the Trump presidency invite us to consider “the probable existence of a threshold of conflict beyond which the ‘we-ness’ constitutive of the [Canada-U.S.] community dissolves” (Pouliot, 2006: 123)
- Instability and the risk of political violence surrounding the 2020 U.S. election damage expectations of non-violence and democracy in the United States, which are foundational to the Canada-U.S. PSC



3 Concluding Questions

1. Do Canada and the U.S. still share “a common security culture – an intersubjective system of meanings about international threats and their required solutions” (Pouliot, 2006: 123)? Does the PSC still exist?
 - Yes. Somewhat. For now.
2. Can the Canada-U.S. PSC endure if the United States does not also consider Canada’s national and security interests, or if the U.S. itself poses a threat to those interests?
 - No.
3. If the ‘we feeling’ that underpins expectations of peaceful change in North America is eroded, what might take its place?
 - A relationship of domination. The strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must.



3 Main Take-Aways

1. Without the foundations of a PSC, non-war relations in North America would reflect basic realities of power that favour the United States
2. The PSC can be repaired: the bonds between Canadians and Americans remain relatively strong, and shared identity and mutual trust can be repaired by whomever succeeds to the White House
3. Canada should not take for granted its relationship with the U.S. for its own national interests

Other References

- Adams, Michael. 2003. *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada, and the Myth of Converging Values*. Toronto: Penguin.
- _____. 2017. *Could It Happen Here? Canada in the Age of Trump and Brexit*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Adler, Emanuel and Michael Barnett. 1998. "A Framework for the Study of Security Communities." In *Security Communities*, eds. Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Anderson, Bruce and David Coletto. 2016. "Shock and Dismay: Canadians on Trump's Victory." Abacus Data. November 15. <https://abacusdata.ca/shock-and-dismay-canadians-on-trumps-victory/>.
- _____. 2017. "Trump and Canadians: It's Not Going Well." Abacus Data. June 10. <https://abacusdata.ca/trump-and-canadians-its-not-going-well/>.
- Carment, David and Christopher Sands, eds. *Canada-US Relations: Sovereignty or Shared Institutions?*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dale, Daniel. 2019. "Donald Trump Fact Check." *The Toronto Star*. April 24. <http://projects.thestar.com/donald-trump-fact-check/>.
- Deutsch, Karl W., Sidney A. Burrell, Robert A. Kahn, Maurice Lee, Martin Lichterman, Raymond E. Lindgren, Francis L. Loewenheim, and Richard W. Van Wagenen. 1957. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Drezner, Daniel W. 2009. "This Time is Different: Why U.S. Foreign Policy Will Never Recover." *Foreign Affairs*. May/June. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-04-16/time-different>.
- Ekos. 2017. *Open Versus Ordered: Cultural Expressions of the New Outlook*. Ottawa: Ekos Politics. http://www.ekospolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/open_vs_ordered_october_10_2017b.pdf.
- Foa, Roberto Stefan and Yascha Mounk. 2017. "The Signs of Deconsolidation." *Journal of Democracy* 28 (4): 5-15.
- Haglund, David. 2010. "A Security Community 'If You Can Keep It': Societal Security, Demography, and the North American Zone of Peace." In *Canada's Foreign and Security Policy: Soft and Hard Strategies of a Middle Power*, eds. Nik Hynek and David Bosold. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.
- Hataley, Todd and Christian Leuprecht. 2019. "Canada-US Security Cooperation: Interests, Institutions, Identity and Ideas." In *Canada-US Relations: Sovereignty or Shared Institutions?*, eds. David Carment and Christopher Sands. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hillmer, Norman and Philippe Lagassé, eds.. In *Justin Trudeau and Canadian Foreign Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lajeunesse, Adam and Rob Huebert. 2019. "Preparing for the Next Arctic Sovereignty Crisis: The Northwest Passage in the Age of Donald Trump." *International Journal* 74 (2): 225-239.
- Nathan, Laurie. 2006. "Domestic Instability and Security Communities." *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (2): 275-299.
- Nimijean, Richard. 2019. "Where is the Relationship Going? The View from Canada." In *Canada-US Relations: Sovereignty or Shared Institutions?*, eds. David Carment and Christopher Sands. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pew Research Centre. 2019. "Republicans Now are More Open to the Idea of Expanding Presidential Power." <https://www.people-press.org/2019/08/07/republicans-now-are-more-open-to-the-idea-of-expanding-presidential-power/>.
- _____. n.d. "Opinion of the United States." <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/database/indicator/1/country/ca>.
- Pouliot, Vincent. 2006. "The Alive and Well Transatlantic Security Community: A Theoretical Reply to Michael Cox." *European Journal of International Relations* 12 (1): 119-127.
- Väyrynen, Raimo. 2000. "Stable Peace through Security Communities? Steps Towards Theory-Building." *Joan B. Kroc Institute Occasional Articles* 18 (3): 157-193.
- Wike, Richard, Bruce Stokes, Jacob Poushter, Janell Fetterolf. 2017. "US image suffers as publics around the world question Trump's leadership." Pew Research Centre. June 26. <https://www.pewglobal.org/2017/06/26/u-s-image-suffers-as-publics-around-world-question-trumps-leadership/>.
- Wike, Richard, Bruce Stokes, Jacob Poushter, Laura Silver, Janell Fetterolf, and Kat Devlin. 2018. "America's international image continues to suffer." Pew Research Centre. October 1. <https://www.pewglobal.org/2018/10/01/americas-international-image-continues-to-suffer/>.

Thank you!

Questions?

